

Message Text

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67

ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

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R 221116Z JAN 76

FM AMEMBASSY CAIRO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9395

INFO DIA WASHDC

USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GE ECJ2

USINFO

AMCONSUL ALEXANDRIA

AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

AMEMBASSY TUNIS

AMEMBASSY TUNIS

US MISSION USUN 3881

C O N F I D E N T I A L CAIRO 0835

USIA FOR USINFO

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, EG, LE, XF

SUBJECT: EGYPTIAN PRESS ON LEBANON

1. CAIRO PRESS CONTINUES TO BE SEIZED WITH EVENTS IN LEBANON
AND CONCENTRATES JANUARY 22 ON "KATA'IB"- "NATIONALIST" FIGHTING.
DRAWING ON NEWS AGENCY REPORTS, ALL PAPERS DESCRIBE SIEGE
OF ZAHLA AND ZAHGORTA, AS WELL AS "TAKING" OF SHTURA AND
NEW THREAT TO FRANJIYA'S HOUSE IN BAABDA. HADDAM'S TALKS WITH
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LEBANESE NOTABLES AND PLO ARE REPORTED WITHOUT COMMENT.

2. PRESENCE PLA TROOPS REPORTED BY AKHBAR AS NOW 4,000 STRONG. GUMHURIYYA CITES NEWS AGENCIES AS GIVING FIGURE OF 3,000 IN AKKARA AND 9,000 TOTAL. THERE IS NO COMMENTARY AND NO OTHER REPORTING OF PLA-SYRIAN MILITARY PRESENCE. HABASH IS CITED AS SAYING PLA HAS ARRIVED TO DEFEND AGAINST REACTIONARY SCHEMES.

3. SHAM'UN RECEIVES BRUNT OF EDITORIAL CRITICISM. FRONT-PAGE COMMENTARIES IN AHRAM AND GUMHURIYYA CASTIGATE SHAM'UN FOR TAKING UPON HIMSELF THE "RIGHT" TO CALL FOR FOREIGN INTERVENTION.

4. ON ARAB LEAGUE SECGEN'S CALL FOR SUMMIT, PAPERS REPORT LEBANESE PREFERENCE TO PROCEED WITH SYRIA'S "NOBLE" OFFER OF MEDIATION. KUWAIT IS REPORTED TO HAVE ANNOUNCED IT SHARES EGYPTIAN VIEW ON ISSUE. (EGYPT HAD PREVIOUSLY ANNOUNCED THAT ARAB LEAGUE SHOULD CONTACT GOL, PALESTINIAN RESISTANCE, AND SOME OTHER ARAB COUNTRIES BEFORE PROCEEDING WITH SUMMIT PLANS.) COMMENT: MENA'S DAILY ENGLISH-LANGUAGE SUMMARY OF CAIRO NEWSPAPERS ERRONEOUSLY REPORTS SYRIA HAS AGREED TO ATTEND SUMMIT. THIS IS APPARENTLY TYPING ERROR. THERE IS ABSOLUTELY NO MENTION IN EGYPTIAN MEDIA OF ANY SUCH SYRIAN DECLARATION AND, TO OUR KNOWLEDGE, SUCH DECLARATION HAS NOT RPT NOT BEEN MADE.

5. COMMENT: PRESS CONTINUES TO SHOW MARKED LACK OF OPTIMISM ABOUT LEBANON AND WE DETECT THE BEGINNINGS OF SOME ANTI-CHRISTIAN REPORTING. KATA'IB ATTACK ON NABAA IS DESCRIBED IN AKHBAR HEADLINE, FOR EXAMPLE, AS "MERCILESS." MORE OMINOUS IS FRONT-PAGE REMAKR BY AHRAM'S EDITOR-IN-CHIEF IN WHICH EDITOR DRAWS ATTENTION TO PREVIOUS DAY'S FEATURE AHRAM PHOTO OF KARANTINA MUSLIMS LINED UP AGAINST WALL, GUARDED BY ARMED CHRISTIAN WEARING LARGE, CLEARLY DISCERNIBLE GREEK CROSS. EDITOR CLAIMS SUCH PICTURES SHOW "HORRIBLE CRIMES AND INSULT" TO WHICH LEBANESE PEOPLE ARE BEING SUBJECTED. SO FAR, GEMAYYEL HAS ESCAPED PERSONAL CRITICISM IN LOCAL MEDIA AND IN RECENT DAYS SO HAS FRANIYA. WE SHOULD NOTE TOO THAT FAHMY HAS ALWAYS EXPRESSED TO AMBASSADOR HIS DETERMINATION THAT ALL COMMUNITIES BE SAFEGUARDED IN ANY FINAL SETTLEMENT, AS HAS PRESIDENT

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